AMENDMENT

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 - 26. (Cancelled)

27. (Currently Amended) A bitstream in computer-readable medium, the bitstream obeying the MPEG-2 or the MPEG-4 protocol that permits the transmission of private data in the [[DSE]] data stream element (DSE) field of the obeyed protocol, the bitstream generated according to a method comprising:

receiving data from a data source;

determining syntax information for the data;

encoding the data and the syntax information into an encoded bitstream, at least a portion of the syntax information being included in the DSE field and the interpretation of said portion of the syntax information being unspecified by the obeyed protocol; and

transmitting the encoded bitstream.

28. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 27, wherein said portion of the syntax information permits a decoder to identify a bit at which decoding should begin.

29. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 28, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and wherein each frame portion includes at least one private data portion.

30. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 27, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and wherein said portion of the syntax information permits a decoder to determine if any bits in a frame portion contain errors.

31. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 27, wherein said portion of the syntax information permits a decoder to determine if any of the bits in the bitstream contain errors.

32. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 27, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and wherein said portion of the syntax information permits a decoder to determine if any of the bits of at least one sub-portion of a frame portion contain errors.

33. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 27, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and wherein at least some of the frame portions further include one or more sub-portions that vary in number and size between different frame portions.

34. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 33, wherein said portion of the syntax information includes at least length information of said one or more sub-portions.

35. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 34, wherein a decoder uses the length information to skip sub-portions of a frame portion that are determined to contain errors.

36. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 27, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and wherein each frame portion further includes a plurality of elements, each element including an element ID that identifies a type of element in the bitstream.

37. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 36, wherein the plurality of elements includes at least a data stream element having a data stream ID.

38. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 37, wherein the data stream element further includes a tag that identifies the type of data contained in a data portion of the data stream element.

39. (Previously presented) The bitstream according to claim 38, wherein when the tag corresponds to a transport identifier, the data stream element includes standard information in the data portion of the data stream element.

40. (Previously presented) An apparatus that transmits data in a bitstream, the bitstream obeying the MPEG-2 or the MPEG-4 protocol that permits the transmission of private data in a private data portion of the bitstream, the apparatus comprising:

means for transmitting a bitstream that receives data from a data source, determines syntax information for the data, encodes the data and the syntax information into an encoded bitstream, at least a portion of the syntax information being included in the private data portion of the encoded bitstream, and transmits the encoded bitstream, the interpretation of said portion of the syntax information being unspecified by the obeyed protocol.

41. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the portion of the syntax information permits a decoder to identify a bit at which decoding should begin.

42. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 41, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and each frame portion includes at least one private data portion.

43. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and the portion of syntax information permits a decoder to determine if any bits in the respective frame portion contain errors.

44. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 40, wherein said portion of the syntax information permits a decoder to determine if any of the bits in the bitstream contain errors.

45. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and wherein the portion of the syntax information permits a decoder to determine if any of the bits of at least one sub-portion of the frame portion contains errors.

46. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and wherein at least some of the frame portions further include one or more sub-portions that vary in number and size between different frame portions.

47. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein said portion of the syntax information includes at least length information of said one or more sub-portions.

48. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 47, wherein the length information enables a decoder to skip sub-portions of a frame portion that are determined to contain errors.

49. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the bitstream comprises a plurality of frame portions and wherein each frame portion further includes a plurality of elements, each element including an element ID that identifies a type of element in the bitstream.

50. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 49, wherein the plurality of elements include at least a data stream element having a data stream ID.

51. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 50, wherein the data stream element further includes a tag that identifies the type of data contained in a data portion of the data stream element.

52. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 51, wherein when the tag corresponds to a transport identifier, the data stream element includes standard information in the data portion of the data stream element.

53. (Previously presented) A method comprising:

receiving a bitstream having a plurality of frame portions, the bitstream obeying the MPEG-2 or the MPEG-4 protocol that permits the transmission of private data in a private data

portion, the interpretation of at least a portion of the data in the private data portion being unspecified by obeyed protocol, the bitstream including encoded data and further including syntax information for the encoded data, at least a portion of the syntax information being included in the private data portion; and

obtaining said portion of the syntax information from said private data portion.

54. (Previously presented) The method of claim 53, wherein said obtained portion of the syntax information is synchronization information enabling said bitstream to be synchronized and wherein said method further comprises synchronizing said bitstream utilizing the obtained synchronization information.

55. (Previously presented) The method of claim 54, wherein said obtained portion of the syntax information is information enabling a decoder to perform at least one of error detection, error control and error recovery.